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Slay Probers Seek To End Sprague War

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The House assassinations committee and Chairman Henry Gonzalez today resumed their bitter fight over the leadership and direction of the stalled probe into the murders of former President John Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

SPRAGUE

The committee is trying to repair a split over Thursday's decision by Gonzalez, D-Tex., to fire Richard Sprague as chief counsel and staff director because of Sprague's recommendation of a $13-million committee budget.

But other members told Sprague not to leave, and the inability to get its internal affairs in order is endangering the future of the controversial committee.

"Much of the committee's future depends on what we do here," Gonzalez said as he called the meeting to order today. The House, apparently tiring of the committee's public bickering, has given it until March 30 to settle its affairs.

"The chair will be willing and able to show cause" for Sprague's firing, he said.

"We may have some degree of conflict" over Sprague, committee member Samuel Devine, R-Ohio, told Gonzalez. Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C., said he shared Devine's reservations.

Sprague, flanked by aides, entered the hearing room and sat in the front public row. When Gonzalez entered, he ignored Sprague.

Gonzalez said the committee would first adopt proposed rules, then discuss its financial condition. He said the last order of business would be the discussion of "the course of events leading to the dismissal of Richard Sprague."